

Downtown Revitalization Committee
Meeting Minutes – Workshop #1

November 17, 2008

7:00 P.M.

- I. **Present:** Chairman Harpie, Mayor Wright, Chris Banach, Mike Lenares, Jeff Hedberg.
Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Others Present: Myra Cohen, Ed Meehan, Town Planner, Val Ginn. Dennis Goderre,
BL Companies and Derek Kohl, BL Companies.

- II. **Project Status** – Chairman Harpie requested the Town Planner to provide a brief summary of project activities since the Committee's last meeting September 29th. Mr. Meehan reported the following progress:

9-29-08	Committee selected BL Companies and recommended their appointment by the Town Council.
10-14-08	Town Council authorized Town Manager to sign contract with BL Companies.
10-15- to 11-10-08	Draft and Review of BL Companies contract.
10-21-08	Town Manager signed DECD Urban Action Grant Financial Assistance Agreement.
10-15 to 11-10-08	Preparation of Project Schedule for DRC Workshops and Public Informational meetings.
10-27-08	Meeting with Dennis Goderre and Town Engineer to review draft contract and clarify project scope.
11-14-08	Town Manager signed BL Companies contract.
11-14-08	Request for Appraisal Quotation for 1076-1090 Main Street issued, Return date December 4 th .

III. **BL Companies Introduction**

Dennis Goderre and Derek Kohl from BL Companies were present and briefed the Committee on a November 13, 2008 Existing Conditions Survey which includes a photo reconnaissance, parking inventory, and preliminary analysis of traffic and drainage. Nine (9) preliminary recommendations were put forth for discussion.

Committee members expressed the following ideas:

- ✓ Develop concept with an identifiable focal point such as a public space for veterans memorial, festivals etc.
- ✓ Create clear distinguished signage at all entry points.
- ✓ Make strong physical connections to adjacent perimeter streets that draw attention to the parking lot.
- ✓ Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities.

The Committee requested BL to be prepared to provide cost estimates for the concept options that are discussed over the next couple of months. The issue of keeping this project on budget pursuant to the Urban Action grant requirements is critical.

The issue of pursuing acquisition of the land behind 1076-1090 Main Street, known as the Richard Bonelli property, must be addressed early in the design process. This property is approximately 24,000 sq. ft. in area and if improved would provide public parking for adjacent Main Street businesses as well as better design options for drainage,

traffic circulation and pedestrian connections. The committee needs to know how much it will have available for construction costs before settling on a preferred design plan.

Ed Meehan reported that the \$1 million grant budget approved by DECD break out as follows:

\$550,000	Construction
230,000	Property acquisition
117,000	Engineering
5,000	Legal (State of Connecticut fee)
<u>98,000</u>	Contingency
\$1,000,000	

Any increase in property cost acquisition will reduce the budget for construction improvements.

The Committee agreed that the purchase of the Bonelli property needs to be moved forward. Mr. Hedberg moved that the Committee request the Town Council to move forward with the purchase of the Bonelli property, even if necessary by the means of eminent domain. Seconded by Mayor Wright. Discussion of this motion lead to further clarification that Mr. Hedberg added that he is not specifying that the purchase of the Bonelli property has to come only from the grant. Chairman Harpie called the vote. In favor were Chairman Harpie, Mayor Wright, Mr. Hedberg, and Mr. Lenares. Mr. Banach abstained. The motion was passed.

Dennis Goderre requested clarification on the provision of extending water supply into the parking lot for irrigation, drinking fountain, public rest rooms. It was the consensus of the Committee that public rest rooms should not be constructed within the municipal parking lot.

Mr. Goderre stated that as the design plan evolves BL will begin to prepare preliminary construction cost estimates. The first cut at an estimate would be January 8th at the public information workshop. Subsequent refinements will be done by BL as the final plan progresses. BL will need to know how much is available for construction by early March. Their experience has been that if sufficient grant funds are not enough a phased approach could be scheduled so that construction is paid from local CIP or may be other grant sources. The first step is to create the vision and then cost out the project.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the Committee adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan
Town Planner